by Syriac Christians who speak Syriac and Arabic. A few villages are completely Armenian. Most of these villages are around Kubur el Bid and Qamishli. These Christian peasants are very devout. They are also conservative and always remember the injuries inflicted upon them in Turkey. There is hardly a Christian family in the towns or villages which did not lose a relative or a friend in the massacres. Therefore they are always on their guard against their Moslem neighbors and are always suspicious of the Government. Their bitterness is not likely to disappear for some time to come, and is a factor to be considered in the political development of Jazirah.

The Christians of Jazirah belong to all creeds and denominations. The largest community in numbers and in importance is the Syriac Orthodox, followed by the Armanian Orthodox. There are Chaldeans, Syriac Catholics, Armanian Catholics, Protestants, Greek Orthodox, Greek Catholic, and Nestorians. It should be mentioned that what determines the origin and affiliation of a man in Jazirah is not his language or dress, but his Church. Thus a Kurd who speaks only the Kurdish language, who lives like a Kurd on the same standard of living, and who dresses like one, is yet an Armenian or a Chaldean or a Jacobite because he belongs to one of these Churches. His original language and customs have been lost by living for ages in a foreign environment. That is why one finds in Jazirah and the mountains beyond it the only Christian Kurds in the world. But in reality they are not Kurds. They are Armenians or Syriacs or Chaldeans who have adopted the Kurdish language and their true nationality can be known only by referring to their Churches.

A more recent concentration of Christians in Jazirah is constituted by the Assyrians around Tal Tamr on the Khabur. Following the massacre of the Assyrians in Iraq in 1933 and their expulsion from that country, the French in Syria gave them asylum, and the League of Nations appropriated funds to settle them along the Khabur. Lands were granted to them and villages were built in which motors and pumps were installed for irrigation. Nevertheless during these 19 years all the efforts appear to have been useless. The ten thousand Assyrians who migrated to Syria lead a wretched life. Their motors are not in a working condition, their crops are not abundant and they are now trying to sell their lands. The reasons for such a condition may be found in the fact that the Assyrians are not farmers and the lands given to them are of a poor quality.

During the French Mandate, the Christians of Jazirah, with the memory of the Turkish massacres still fresh, and considering all

Moslems alike whether Turks or Arabs, and being suspicious of the surrounding Kurdish and Bedouin tribes, relied on the French for protection and became a tool in their hands to oppose the nationalistic aims of Syria. 6621 1821

When in 1936 negotiations between France and Syria started for the conslusion of a treaty similar to the British-Iraqi treaty, French officials in Syria who were opposed to such a policy played on the fears of the Jazirah Christians and incited them to rebellion. They rose up and drove out the Syrian public employees and proclaimed Jazirah independent. They were supported by a majority of the Kurds who feared Bedouin domination in case Syria became independent, and by some Bedouin Sheiks notably the Sheiks of Tay and of Jagjag Jubur. Dham and Mizor, Chiefs of Shammar, and the Sheik of Khabur Jubur, remained loyal to the Syrian Government. The problem was solved when the negotiations in Paris failed and the French resumed their authority in 1937. All remained quiet during the war, and when Syria became independent through the intervention of the British in 1945, no one in Jazirah made any difficulty. 648 669 619

The population of Jazirah was estimated at the end of 1951 to be 162,000. This estimate can only be tentative because no census was taken and the number of unregistered persons is large. The Shammars are mostly unregistered and so are the Juburs. The same holds true of the Kurds who have migrated from Turkey. 1624 659 361

The number of members in each denomination is unknown, as is the number of town dwellers. Qamishli is estimated to have 30,000 inhabitants, Amuda and Derbassiya 8-10,000 each, and Hassakeh above 10,000. Kurds probably outnumber the Bedouins in Jazirah.

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Islamic world had been much affected by influences from the Mediterranean countries, from Persia and from India. It had had the power to assimilate the products of other civilizations, and also to extend its dominion over peoples alien to the Arabs in origin and way of life. But later it ceased to develop and either to give out or to receive influences; and although the stream of influences from the West never completely vanished, during the great days of the Ottoman Empire it was smaller and less effective than it had previously been and was again to become.

II

In the past century or more this Arab world has been shaken to its foundations by the impact of the West. Western ideas, learned from schools, from books and latterly from the cinema, have changed at least the externals of social life. The competition of Western goods has broken the old crafts and opened up new economic possibilities. New means of communication are breaking up the closed local community; the life of the Beduin is threatened by the motor-car, the aeroplane and the extension of civil authority. The administrative machinery which the modern Government commands, and the extension of the limits of its action, are making the old feudal and sectarian organization unnecessary and even impossible. New Western rulers have imposed themselves, who have not even so much claim to be obeyed or such deep roots in popular memory and habit as had the Ottoman Sultan. The new social, economic and political life has in its turn shaken the domination of Moslem jurisprudence; and men have begun to raise new questions of the adequacy of religious faith and loyalty as a basis for society, and the place of Islam in the modern world. A new world has revealed itself, which strikes at the very foundations of the old, and is indeed its exact antithesis.

The transformation of the old life has brought with it a number of difficulties and dangers. The Arabs, like other peoples in their position, are torn between two ways of life. Sentiment, tradition and the belief that there is something of value in their tradition make them unwilling to break entirely with the old civilization, even if that were possible. But at the same time the necessities of modern life, and often a conviction that the Western civilization is in some ways

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178 better than their own, impel them to accept certainly the
182 economic technique of the West and possibly much more.

This self-division between two ways of life is full of inconveniences. It may produce an abnormal tension of mind and nerve in the individual, and temporarily obscure moral and aesthetic standards. What is more important, it may stifle the creative energies of an individual and a people, and make it difficult for them to speak with their own voice and think their own thoughts. On another level, it is almost inevitable that the process of change should be attended with great economic dislocation, as the old crafts die out; with social unrest, as the introduction of new economic processes brings in its train a new relationship of the social classes; and with political instability, since it takes time to learn the art of constructing and managing a modern Government. Among the educated classes the tension may result in a profound melancholy and a paralysis of the will: the qualities which haunt the world of the Russian novelists of the nineteenth century.

178 The dislocation and difficulties have been particularly great for two reasons. The first is that the change has left no part of life untouched. It is a complete upheaval both of the Arab mind and of Arab society. Secondly, it is not a single change of which the force will sooner or later spend itself. It is the introduction of a dynamic principle by virtue of which one change prepares the way for another, and no end to the series is perceptible. The change is not from one static position to another, but from a static community ruled by custom to a dynamic society, moulded and governed by positive laws and by a conception of individual, social or national welfare.

12

182 It may be that the difficulties will so press upon the Arabs that they will accept self-division as inevitable and give up the attempt to reconcile the new and the old. If that happens, they will become Levantines.

To be a Levantine is to live in two worlds or more at once, without belonging to either; to be able to go through the external forms which indicate the possession of a certain nationality, religion or culture, without actually possessing it. It is no longer to have a standard of values of one's own, not

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to be able to create but only able to imitate; and so not even to imitate correctly, since that also needs a certain originality. It is to belong to no community and to possess nothing of one's own. It reveals itself in lostness, pretentiousness, cynicism and despair.

There have always been Levantines in the ports of the eastern Mediterranean, because they are places where more than one world meets to do business. But the special mark of the present age is the spread of the Levant inland to regions hitherto untouched by it. In a sense every Arab, or at least every educated Arab of the towns, is forced to live in two worlds. Not only his way of thought but his social life is becoming daily more deeply affected by Europe and America; but at heart he is still an Arab and usually a Moslem. A few may be strong enough to face the problem and create a new unity out of discordant elements; but the majority are likely to take the line of least resistance, and passively acquiesce in their division of soul. As the process of Westernization passes from stage to stage the problem becomes ever more acute. Will the few succeed in influencing the many, and showing them the way to a Westernized life which is nevertheless genuinely Arab and Moslem; or will the many submerge the few, and all be drowned in a common Levantinism? That is the crisis of Arab culture in our time.

13

There is only one bulwark against Levantinism: that the Arabs should believe in their own possibilities and their power, given the necessary conditions, of building up once more a world of thought and activity which they can call their own and through which they can make their contribution to the world's civilization. This belief exists, and in consequence there can be seen an active response by the Arabs to the new difficulties by which they are beset.

This response expresses itself in a striving towards unity such as the old community possessed: towards the creation of a 'world' unified by the possession of common principles which permeate every aspect of society and which those who live in it recognize as valid. There is a further attempt, closely connected with this, to establish satisfactory relations between that world and the Western world, which it will inevitably resemble in many ways but from which it will

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fundamental principles. But it is important also for other reasons. Greek thought lies at the root of that Islamic philosophy of the Middle Ages of which the significance has already been mentioned : it is therefore part of the intellectual heritage of the Islamic East as well as of the West ; it may serve as that common ground of agreement and understanding which is necessary if a fruitful intellectual contact is to be re-established between the Moslem and the Christian worlds.

5

The Syrian people will have a special part to play in the intellectual reconstruction of Islam, because of certain characteristics which they possess. They are peculiarly aware of the 'tension' between East and West, and between Islam and Christianity. This is partly because their minds are exceptionally subtle, flexible and sensitive ; but partly also because Syria has always been exposed to influences coming in from Mediterranean lands, and tends to be affected by them sooner and more profoundly than the other Arab countries. Through the mission-schools, through emigration and in other ways there has been built up in Syria an educated class Westernized in spirit as well as in externals, but still Arabic in language and for the most part in sympathies and feeling. Thus the conflict between East and West has become a conflict inside their own souls ; as such it raises problems which pose themselves with peculiar urgency.

The factors which make the problems more profoundly felt and more urgent in Syria than elsewhere make them also more likely to find a solution there. It is educated Syrians who are best fitted to see the tension between East and West on the level not of politics or polemics but of doctrine. But if they are to contribute effectively to the revival of the Arab and Islamic mind, they must develop an intellectual life of their own, and not be content to become culturally a province of Egypt.

6

There is one factor which gives Syria a unique position in the Arab world. It possesses a large Christian population, whose intellectual life and Christian consciousness have been reviving in recent years. The impact of the West upon them has been as great as upon the Moslems, although of course it has taken a

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different form: the West has meant for them not only the discovery of a new way of life but, in the most fundamental things, a rediscovery of their true selves. The result has been an interesting and important revival of Christian culture, expressing itself through Arabic and through French. It began as a revival of literature and language, and as such was a part, and a very important part, of the general Arabic literary renaissance; but gradually it is becoming conscious of the deepest spiritual question which faces it, the question of what it is to be an Arab Christian.

This movement of Christian life and thought is important first of all for its own sake, but also for the part it may play in the re-awakening of Islam. The Syrian Christians are, as Christians, particularly fitted to understand the culture of Europe; while as Arabs, speaking the Arabic language and conversant with its literature, they can interpret Europe to the Arab Moslems and, what is more important still, can confront them inescapably with the challenge of Christianity. They do not feel the conflict between the West and the Islamic East in exactly the same form as that in which Moslems feel it. But they feel it in another form, and in one which raises problems of which the solution is both particularly necessary and particularly difficult. For them the problem poses itself as one of political loyalties, and therefore their material well-being and perhaps even their physical safety depend upon their solving it. In the conflict between the European Powers and the forces of nationalism, on which side should they range themselves? Religious affinities, long-standing ties of friendship, gratitude for favours received and fear of Moslem domination draw them to the side of Europe; but ties of language and culture, common feelings of humiliation and pride, and the desire to put an end to the religious dissensions of the past attract them to the nationalist camp. Divided loyalties of this sort are tragic, but they are also a necessary stage in the development of thought, alike for the individual and for whole peoples; it is in the struggle to reunite the divided personality that the intellect becomes mature. The Christians stand to the Syrian people roughly as the latter as a whole to the Arab people: it is in them that the tension which is felt vaguely and in some degree by all goes deepest and may reach its crisis earliest. But if the crisis is to be fruitful, they must try at one and the same time

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to remember that they are Christians, and revive their specific Eastern Christian thought and life, and to remember that they are part of Arab Asia and have a special mission to perform in the East. The attempt has already begun. Among the Catholics and Greek Orthodox of Beirut there are already small groups of thinkers who are trying to understand the nature of Christianity and of their special duty as members of the Eastern Churches; there are other groups which are struggling with the question of the national existence and loyalty of the Arab Christians. There are very few, however, who are trying to hold together in a balance the two aspects of their being, as Christians and as Arabs. The attempt is difficult, some would say impossible; but on its success depends much more than their own fate.

7.

The other movement, that of secularization, springs from the belief of many Arab thinkers that the superior strength and stability of Western society is due to the limitations which have been imposed upon the action and influence of religion. (This belief illustrates one of the main characteristics of Arab thought to-day: the conviction that the West has a 'secret', which, if only the Arabs could find it, would confer on them success similar to that of the Western nations.) In Western thought, each 'field' is autonomous in the choice of its principles and methods; and the Western community is a secular community, in which religion is tolerated, but no longer gives the regulative principles for every kind of human activity. Western thought is no longer theocentric, Western society no longer theocratic. In the same way the Arabs, these thinkers argue, should no longer attempt to regulate their society by Islamic doctrine and law; they should curb the pretensions of the religious leaders, and having done so should reorganize each aspect of their community in the light of those principles which Western experience shows to be appropriate to it. Secularism has taken many shapes. It has been one of the factors in the growth of the nationalist movement.[1] It is also giving rise to a movement of philosophical, ethical and social thought.

In the sphere of philosophical thought, this movement has so far made little headway. Books have been written upon

[1] See Chapter VI.